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ABSTRACT

Since the late 1970s, California's rural poor (frequently immigrants and refugees) have been engaged in grassroots efforts to change the cultural and political landscapes of their communities. Told in the words of rural people, this book presents six stories of struggle and empowerment. In Yuba City, Latino and East Indian farmworkers felt that their children's educational needs were not being met. They formed the Migrant Parents Advisory Committee, a multicultural trilingual advocacy group that has shaped migrant school programs, lobbied successfully for additional bilingual counselors and a Latina principal, worked with the school district to open a preschool, and gone into classrooms to teach Latino and Punjabi history and culture. Other stories are about: (1) farmworkers, farmers, and environmentalists forming a coalition to fight a toxic waste incinerator in Kettleman City; (2) a Mexican-American women's group in the Coachella Valley addressing the needs of campesinas and their families by disseminating health-education information, lobbying school boards, working to curb domestic violence, and participating in political campaigns; (3) Hmong refugees building a new community through their art and farming skills; (4) farmworker families organizing a cooperative housing community in Soledad; and (5) Mexican and Central American farmworkers struggling to rise above the poverty of shanty towns in the canyons of San Diego County. This document contains many photographs. (SV)

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